

**CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW  
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: January 23, 2004

TO: City Council

FROM: Barbara McBride, Staff Liaison, Visual Arts Committee

SUBJECT: JANUARY 27, 2004 STUDY SESSION—ART FOR CENTENNIAL PLAZA

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The Visual Arts Committee is recommending that the City Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement with the National Sculptors' Guild to commission a sculpture of an old-fashioned baggage cart and boy in period clothing by Loveland, Colorado, artist Dee Clements.

The purpose of this study session is to review this recommendation with the City Council prior to agendizing the item for formal action.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

City policy requires that 1 percent of the construction budget of all public projects (\$1 million or more) be devoted to art. Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000), 1 percent of construction cost, was the amount allocated for the art for Centennial Plaza, Project 00-49. Thirty-Three Thousand Dollars (\$33,000) would need to be added to this amount (from the remaining project balance) to enable the purchase of the proposed piece and to cover additional costs for transportation (\$2,000) and installation (\$1,000) for a total expense of \$53,000. Since the remaining balance in the project is sufficient to fund the recommended sculpture, no budget adjustment is required.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

Early in 2002, the Visual Arts Committee reviewed the proposed site plans for the Plaza and recommended a medallion be inlaid into the Plaza for the art (Attachment 1). It was decided that, given Mill Valley artist Larry Shank's experience and expertise in bronze (he created the art for Fire Station No. 2), he be contacted to see if he would be interested in submitting a proposal. He submitted a proposal of two bronze medallions—one depicting historical themes at the old train station and the other showing alternate modes of transportation. These were planned for the pedestrian walkway.

This proposal was brought to a Council study session in April 2002. At that meeting, the Council did not take action on this recommendation and, instead, asked for alternatives. During the discussion, most Councilmembers indicated they wanted a more significant piece of art, definitely something figurative and possibly whimsical. The Councilmembers volunteered ideas, including an old-fashioned baggage cart, crates of fruit being shipped out of the orchards and a bronze station master (Attachment 2).

Members of the Visual Arts Committee who were present expressed concern that \$20,000 was not enough to purchase the type of artwork being suggested. Councilmembers expressed a willingness to consider additional funding for the art.

In September 2002, the Visual Arts Committee issued a Request for Proposals (Attachment 3) and received 23 responses. Among the submissions was one from Columbine Gallery (National Sculptors' Guild) in Loveland, Colorado, for an old-fashioned baggage cart with two figures—a baggage handler and a young boy in period dress. This would be a limited edition commission cast in bronze. The artist, Dee Clements, priced the piece at \$75,000 (Attachment 4). This is the same gallery that created the popular Crocodile Dundee piece at the Middlefield light rail station.

The Committee was interested in this proposal, believing that it was in line with what the Council was asking for, but the cost increase was significant. At the direction of the Committee, staff asked the Columbine Gallery to work with Mr. Clements to modify the proposal so it would be no greater than \$50,000. The artist removed the baggage handler figure but left the boy sitting on the cart. To make up for the loss of the figure, he incorporated some boxes and baskets of fruit that would reference Mountain View's agricultural heritage. The piece will be made of bronze, approximately 5' high, 3' wide and 8' deep (Attachment 5). The original proposal is a possible alternative to the recommended sculpture.

Planning and Public Works staff have walked the site and determined that the best placement for the art is on the right rear of the building about 20' from the covered seating area. This space is situated between two lampposts, so it will not require special lighting and is visible from most parts of the Plaza (Attachment 6).

At its January 2004 meeting, the Visual Arts Committee discussed the final design of the sculptor as well as the materials and site options. They voted 6–0 to recommend it to the City Council for consideration (Attachment 7).

**CONCLUSION**

This particular sculpture reflects the historic character of the station building and the Centennial Plaza theme. It will appeal to a wide and diverse audience and will be relatively maintenance and repair free.

Prepared by:

Approved by:

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- Attachments:
1. Larry Shank's Proposal
  2. April 2002 Study Session Minutes
  3. Request for Proposals
  4. Dee Clements' Biography—Original Proposal
  5. Revised Proposal
  6. Proposed Site for Sculpture
  7. January 14, 2004 Visual Arts Committee Minutes